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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMBASSY, THE HAGUE

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

REF : COUN--Refugee and Escapee Subcommittee

347

DESP. NO.

September 17, 1952

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SUBJECT: Visit to Netherlands of Senator Willis Smith and Staff Members of Senate Judiciary Committee

Senator Willis Smith, accompanied by Mrs. Smith and five members of the Senate Judiciary Committee staff, arrived at Schiphol airport, Amsterdam, from Oslo at 2:00 p.m. Tuesday, September 9. The group was met at the airport by the control officer, and driven to a hotel in The Hague. At 4:30 the group attended an informal briefing session in the Ambassador's office. The briefing consisted of an outline by the Ambassador of the political and economic situation in the Netherlands, with special emphasis on the Netherlands' surplus population problem. The Chief of the US Mission and the Embassy's Military Attaché also made short statements and answered questions from the Senator and Mr. Richard Arens.

The Senator said he realized that settlement or integration of refugees and escapees was not a problem in the Netherlands, but he said that the group had anyway wanted to come to Holland to make certain that it had not overlooked any source of information on the subject during its visit to Europe. The Senator and Mr. Arens were each given an envelope containing background material which it was thought might be of interest to the Subcommittee. For the Department's information, an envelope containing the same material is attached as an enclosure to this despatch.

After the briefing session, the group attended a reception in their honor from 5:30 to 7:30 at the Ambassador's residence. The reception afforded the Senator and Judiciary Committee staff members an opportunity to meet and talk with Mr. L. J. M. Beel, Deputy Prime Minister, with a number of members of the Second Chamber, with Dutch Government officials working in the subcommittee's field of interest, and with Australian and Canadian Immigration officials stationed in The Hague. As the Senator and his party had had to get up at about 5:30 that morning to catch the plane from Oslo, nothing was scheduled for the remainder of the evening.

For several hours after the Senator's arrival the Senator and Mrs. Smith and the staff members were considerably inconvenienced

State Dept. review completed

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3 Enclosures REPORTER

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by the non-arrival of half of their baggage, that part which had been sent from Oslo by air freight. The group had been told at the airport in Oslo that the baggage sent as air freight would go on the same plane, but as there was a change of planes en route in Copenhagen, the baggage coming by air freight was evidently off-loaded there, and held for a freight plane later in the day. Fortunately, the freight plane arrived a little after 9:00 p.m., so that the Embassy was finally able to deliver the bags to the Senator at about 11:00 p.m.

The following day, Wednesday, September 10, the Senator and the Committee staff members attended a meeting of Dutch Government officials and private economists interested in refugee questions. The meeting was held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the chairmanship of Dr. H. O. Baron van Boetzelaer, Chief of the General Affairs office of the Ministry. Baron van Boetzelaer opened the meeting with a statement explaining what the Netherlands Government has done to help solve the refugee problem. A copy of this statement is attached as an enclosure to this despatch. It has been classified RESTRICTED at the request of Baron van Boetzelaer because it contains a discussion of the Dutch Government's activities in taking care of some recent refugees from Eastern Europe.

Senator Smith replied to Baron van Boetzelaer with a few words explaining the purposes of Senate Resolution 326, after which Mr. Richard Arens of the Judiciary Committee Staff asked some questions about the number and categories of refugees in the Netherlands. As some of the figures cited by Baron van Boetzelaer did not agree completely with others given in the course of the meeting, the Dutch promised to put together some more detailed statistics on the subject, and to send these statistics to Mr. Arens in the next few weeks.

The rest of the meeting was given over to a lengthy discussion of the merits of the Sonne Plan for integrating ethnic German refugees into the West German economy. The consensus of Dutch opinion was that the plan was economically feasible, and that, if counterpart funds were available to help finance it, it could probably be put into effect without any great risk of bringing on inflation in Germany. In response to a request by Mr. Arens, Mr. J. Tinbergen, Director of the Netherlands Government Central Plan Bureau, promised to write a short statement giving his personal views on the feasibility of the Sonne plan. Mr. Tinbergen was a member of the Economic Committee of experts appointed by the German Government to give advice to the group drawing up the Sonne plan. Mr. Tinbergen will send the statement to Mr. Arens via the Embassy sometime during the next few weeks.

The meeting ended with a few general remarks by Senator Smith. The Senator painted a somber picture of the economic difficulties

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facing the United States at the present time. He said that the per capita public debt of the United States was much higher than anywhere else, that unemployment in the United States was much higher percentage-wise than in many European countries (including the Netherlands), and that the tax burden in the United States was truly staggering. These facts, the Senator said, made it impossible for the United States to permit any really large-scale immigration. The Senator qualified this, however, by saying that Dutch farmers were still welcome in the United States, and that there were in fact several colonies of up-standing Dutch-origin farmers in his own state of North Carolina.

After the meeting at the Ministry, the Senator and his party went sight-seeing about The Hague, and then had lunch at their hotel. At four in the afternoon, they returned to the Ambassador's office to attend a meeting with Mr. G. J. van Heuven Goedhart, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Mr. Goedhart had flown to the Netherlands from Geneva specially to see the Senator and the Committee Staff. A memorandum of conversation reporting on the meeting with the High Commissioner is attached as an enclosure to this despatch.

In the evening Senator and Mrs. Smith were entertained at dinner by the Deputy Chief of Mission, Counselor W. C. Trimble.

The only item in the program for the morning of Thursday, September 11, was a visit to the Permanent Court of International Justice. Senator Smith called on the First Secretary of Court, Mr. J. F. Lalive, and discussed general legal questions with him. In the afternoon, Senator Smith and his party left The Hague by car for Brussels. Two automobiles were provided by the Embassy and one by the MSA Mission.

A U.S.I.B. press release on the Senator's visit was issued some days before his arrival. A reporter from the Socialist daily "Het Parool" interviewed the Senator on his arrival at the airport, but neither "Het Parool" nor any other Dutch newspaper carried any articles on the visit.

The Senator appeared pleased with his visit to the Netherlands. In conversations with Dutch officials he several times paid the

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Netherlands the usual compliment of naming it with Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries as one of the nations which impressed him most favorably in his trip to Europe.

Approved by:

Harold H. Rhodes
Harold H. Rhodes,
First Secretary of Embassy

For the Ambassador:

Thomas A. Donovan
Thomas A. Donovan,
Second Secretary of Embassy

Enclosures:

1. Speech of Baron van Boetzelaer of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at meeting of experts, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 10.
2. Memorandum of conversation on meeting between sub-committee and UN High Commissioner for Refugees, September 10.
3. Envelope containing background material on Netherlands given to Senator Smith and Mr. Richard Arens, September 9.

Original, Mat, Copy to Department

cc with Enclosures 1 and 2: MSA, The Hague
AmConGeneral, Amsterdam
AmConsulate, Rotterdam,
AmConGeneral, Geneva
HICOG, Bonn
AmEmbassy, Athens
AmEmbassy, Vienna

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The Hague

**Speech of Dr. E.O. Baron van Boetzelaer
at the experts' meeting with
Senator Willis Smith and company,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
September 10, 1952**

A very important mission has been entrusted to you: to study and try to find a solution to the problem of those who find their way through the iron curtain. You aim the well-being of courageous people who seek the democratic freedom and may enforce the democratic nations.

I, however, have to warn you that you will find few materials for your study in our country as luckily the Netherlands do not border on the iron curtain.

I think it is needless to point out that there is a great difference between a country which is the first country of refuge and a country which is remote from the danger zone. The first country of refuge is - if I may say so - morally bound to accept as many refugees as possible, unless, however, such masses of refugees ask asylum that the admittance would lead to a political and economic destruction of the country of refuge. If, on the other hand, refugees ask to enter a remote country, the question can be dealt with in another way and the economic situation and the safety of the country concerned have to be taken care of. No refugee would be better off if his transfer would only result into another stay in a camp without any possibility of finding work.

The Netherlands have been in the position of first country of refuge in the years after 1933 when about 20 thousand German Jews found asylum in our country. Alas, 16000 of them perished during the war, others were able to emigrate to overseas countries, some thousands are still staying in this country. After the war the Netherlands were no longer a first country of refuge. Nevertheless about 2.500 members of the Polish liberation army, who asked for asylum, were allowed to settle in this country, many of them are engaged as miners. Through IRO our Government accepted about 4.000 refugees from camps in Germany. In total you may find about 7 to 8.000 refugees in the Netherlands. This figure may seem a small one to you. Anyhow it does not indicate that we are not interested in the problem. The appeal addressed in September 1951 by our Queen to your President, to which Mr. Truman answered in such a sympathetic way, is a first proof of the contrary. For further proof, I will have to provide you with some other figures. According to the census of 1920 the population of the Netherlands amounted to about 6.965.000, in 1949 to 10.026.000, during the last years the population increased at a rate of about 120.000 per annum. The density of the population in the Netherlands was 309.5 per KM² in 1949. I believe you will

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find a greater density of population in some parts of Asia and in the island of Java only. The problem of feeding their population becomes more and more serious for the Netherlands. This problem can only partly be met by the development of sources of livelihood, in particular by industrialisation. The development of these sources has relatively lagged behind the population increase owing to national and international economic dislocation and the changed relations between the Netherlands and Indonesia.

Emigration, especially to overseas countries, is another important and necessary means of alleviating the burden of population increase. We aim at an emigration of about 60,000 people per annum.

I hope that in the light of the above you will understand that our relatively small figure of refugees is not due to a lack of understanding the importance of the problem but to the impossibility of feeding and housing large quantities of newcomers. Nevertheless we take our part in the general responsibility whenever it seems possible. So recently we offered hospitality to a few hundreds of "hard core" cases of the camps in Germany. To refugees who want to emigrate the same facilities are being granted as to our own people.

So far I have mostly dealt with the refugee problem as it was under IRO responsibility. What I told you about the general conditions of our country applies also to the part we can take in the solution of the problem of the neo-refugees who are of your concern. Not being a first country of refuge we are - generally speaking - not directly faced with this problem. I may mention a few Polish seamen trying to leave their ships in our harbours. As communism has many means to send its emissaries over the world, the Netherlands authorities have to be extremely careful in allowing those seamen to go ashore.

A way in which we offer some help to new refugees is by assisting refugee students. In the spring of 1948 a university institution, the "Universitair Asyl Fund", which makes it its aim to give European refugee students an opportunity of pursuing their studies in the Netherlands was established. The funds, necessary for the study of these students are obtained from Netherlands students and those who have finished their studies and from various concerns, other institutions and private persons. No subsidy is given by the State, but students are being exempted from paying university fees. On November 1st, 1950, 56 students, of whom about 50% were Czechs, studies under the auspices of the "U.A.F."; on October 31st, 1951 this number had declined to 39. A number of students finished their studies (6), some other students left this country for emigration purposes (9), and some students, whose studies were not successful, were assisted in finding a job.

Finally I should like to mention another contribution of our Government, but here I have to talk "off the record" and ask you to

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The Hague

make no mention of it in your report, as it would be most detrimental to those concerned. You will remember that after World War I, when luckily we remained neutral, many undernourished Hungarian children were received by Dutch families to recover their health. The bonds so created lasted for years afterwards. When rumours penetrated on the mass deportations in Hungary many Dutch families wanted to offer hospitality to their unfortunate Hungarian friends. The Netherlands Government approved the settlement of about 200 Hungarians, whose lives were endangered, under condition that their housing and livelihood are guaranteed. The Netherlands Minister in Budapest was instructed to approach the Hungarian Government on this matter but it was flatly rejected as interference with internal Hungarian affairs and our Minister was indoctrinated in the benefits of communism. The only thing that our Minister could do after this rebuff was to issue pre-visa to those Hungarians who fulfilled the conditions set forth by our Government; on these pre-visa the people concerned could try to get the necessary papers to leave their country. Needless to say that one of the benefits of communism consists in impeding as much as possible to fly from this paradise on earth. Since July '51 110 pre-visa have been granted, but up till now only 8 of them have been able to leave Hungary. The story I just told you would be a splendid propaganda against communism; however we did not want and still do not want to have it used as propaganda material because this would have meant an absolute stop on any regular departure from Hungary to the Netherlands. That is the reason why I asked for your discretion before telling you this episode.

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The Hague

Memorandum of Conversation

Participants:

Senator Willis Smith

Mr. Richard Arens
Mr. Drury Blair
Mr. Frank Schroeder
Mr. William Webster
Mr. William Arens

} Members of Judiciary Committee Staff

Dr. G. J. van Heuven Goedhart, United Nations
Commissioner for Refugees

Mr. William C. Trimble, Counselor of Embassy
Mr. Thomas A. Donovan, Second Secretary

The meeting opened with statements by Senator Smith and Mr. Richard Arens thanking Dr. Goedhart for coming to the Netherlands. Mr. Arens then asked Dr. Goedhart what he thought of the Sonne Plan for integrating ethnic German refugees into the economy of West Germany. Mr. Arens said that the sub-committee had been very much impressed by the plan as it had been described to the sub-committee in Germany.

Dr. Goedhart replied that he thought the plan was a good one, but that, as matters now stood, two changes should be made in the plan.

In the first place, the plan needed to be brought up to date. The plan had been drafted more than two years ago. In this time there had been many changes in the economic situation in Germany. Dr. Goedhart did not know in what particulars the plan was perhaps out-of-date, but he said it would no doubt be easy enough to revise it sufficiently to take better account of present-day conditions than the original version of the plan could do.

In the second place, the Sonne plan or something like the Sonne plan should be applied in Austria. The number of refugees in Austria was smaller percentage-wise than in Germany, but the political importance of Austria made it especially necessary to do everything possible for refugees there. Dr. Goedhart said that the existence of a large body of unassimilated refugees was a real danger to the political stability of Austria. The exposed geographical position of Austria made it absolutely essential that this threat to the political stability of Austria not be allowed to continue.

Dr. Goedhart then described some of his own plans as UN High Commissioner for Refugees. He said that he planned to use a large

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To **the Hague**

part of the money he had recently been given by the Ford Foundation in setting up self-help projects in Austria. As examples of such projects, he described a scheme whereby unused farm land would be rented and made available to refugee farmers, and a plan whereby tools would be bought to enable refugee glass workers to earn their own livings. The High Commissioner laid particular stress on the fact that this program was based on the assumption that the main answer to the refugee problem was assimilation in the countries the refugees were now in.

Mr. Arens said that it was refreshing to hear such good sense spoken for a change, as the sub-committee agreed completely with the High Commissioner that integration of the refugees was the only answer to the problem.

Dr. Goedhart replied that this was a point he had long felt strongly, and that in the past too many people had overlooked the necessity of helping integrate refugees into the economies of the countries the refugees were in. He said he could not agree, however, that integration was the only answer. In his view, integration should take care of from 75 to 85 per cent of the refugees, but emigration was probably the answer for the remainder.

Mr. Arens said he hoped Dr. Goedhart would be able to come to the United States to testify before the sub-committee early next year, as his point of view should be better known in the States. Mr. Arens said that the Walter Committee had returned from Europe last year with the message that the United States must give still more visas to refugees. The present sub-committee, on the contrary, was convinced that visas were not the answer, and that integration was the answer. The sub-committee intended to do what it could to get this point across in the States. Mr. Arens then criticized the pro-emigration and anti-integration bias of Americans who had been associated with IRO in the past.

Dr. Goedhart replied that it was true that many officials at the lower levels tended to think only in terms of getting more visas for the refugees, but that at the higher levels he was sure there was now and had for a long time been a full appreciation of the importance of integration. Dr. Goedhart said he would be glad to come before the sub-committee in Washington, and that it wouldn't be necessary to subpoena him, as Mr. Arens had jokingly suggested, as he already planned to visit the States in a few months.

The meeting ended with a promise by Dr. Goedhart to send the sub-committee some statistics on the refugee problem in Greece and elsewhere and some details as to his plans for trial projects to

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From **The Hague**

help integrate refugees into the Western European economy. The offer to send the statistics arose out of a remark that Dr. Goedhart had made to the effect that the refugee problem in Greece was particularly difficult. The Senator and Mr. Arens had contested this, saying that they had been told by Mr. Venizelos (Venizelos) in Athens that refugees were no longer much of a problem in Greece. Dr. Goedhart said he realized the numbers were small, but said that in proportion to resources available to care for the refugees, the problem in Greece was still very serious.

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